

NEW YORK

MAP NO. 11: THE LOWER-LOWER EAST SIDE



How Low Can You Go?

NOT SO LONG AGO, you'd have done anything to get away from the Lower-Lower East Side. Now you'll do anything to come back. The French bistros and avant-garde boutiques that spilled across Houston Street from the East Village have crossed Delancey and creep right up to the borders of Chinatown. Hip-hop brunch joints sit peacefully cheek by jowl with slick-floored fishmongers. Million-dollar lofts peer down at one-buck-dumping shops. And a 25-block zone once occupied mainly by Chinese meat markets and the odd yarmulke emporium has become the most intriguing neighborhood in Manhattan.

MATT GROSS

1 The Lower East Side Tenement Museum

108 Orchard St., at Delancey St. 212-431-0233 The ultimate repository of local history runs tours through the restored homes of the German, Jewish, and Italian immigrants who lived here more than a century ago. The museum's coolest project is right up to date: "Folk Songs for the Five Points," at tenement.org/folksongs, lets you create a neighborhood soundtrack by mixing sound samples.

2 Blue Moon Hotel

100 Orchard St., nr. Delancey St. 212-533-9080 From the outside, the neighborhood's first boutique hotel looks like a tenement. But the 22 rooms (\$275 to \$875 per night), named for bygone celebs like Tommy Dorsey and Al Jolson, look like ghetto grottoes gone upscale, with ceiling fans and wrought-iron beds. An immigrant-themed restaurant, Sweet Dreams, is expected to open by early autumn.

3 Congee Village

100 Allen St., nr. Delancey St. 212-941-1818 This Cantonese hot spot has earned acclaim for its namesake rice porridge, which is best with roast duck and meatballs (classic pork and preserved egg is a favorite, too). Book a private room, bring a dozen friends, and order the house-special chicken. Karaoke is optional.

4 Il Laboratorio del Gelato

95 Orchard St., nr. Broome St. 212-343-9922 A spring expansion will mean the city's best frozen treats come in twenty flavors, including brand-new blends such as Cheddar cheese and wasabi.

5 Recollections

90 Orchard St., nr. Broome St. 212-387-0341 When you want your million-dollar loft to look like a nineteenth-century hovel, stop at the Tenement Museum's store for chandeliers, old wallpaper, and enameled cast-iron stoves.

6 Kehila Kedosha Janina

280 Broome St., nr. Allen St.

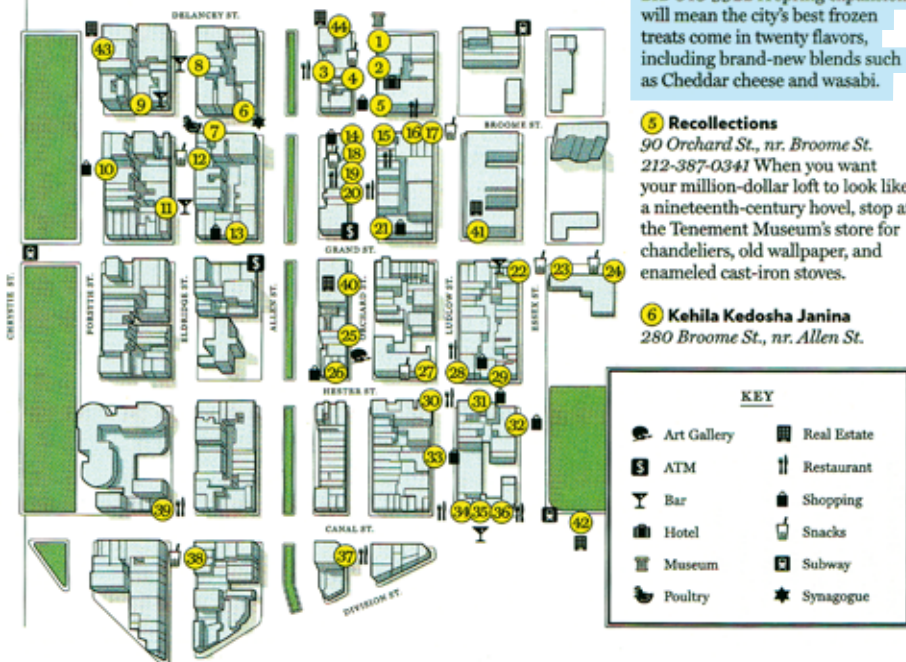
212-431-1619 Delve into the fascinating history of the 2,000-year-old Greek-Jewish heritage at this untouched synagogue; see particularly the large collection of alephs, hand-painted birth certificates unique to the Romaniotes sect.

7 Bo Bo Poultry Market

287 Broome St., nr. Eldridge St. 212-274-0130 There's nothing like a freshly slaughtered bird for dinner. These poultry perfectionists will provide you with, say, a \$12 pair of partridges from their farms upstate.

8 Milk & Honey

134 Eldridge St., nr. Delancey St. Disguised as a tailor's shop, Sasha Petraske's semi-secret ode to the cocktail bars of yore requires a reservation. It's worth it: The throwback cocktails are the best in the city, and the leather banquettes are plush enough to make you think you're in *The Sting*.



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